

Breast Cancer Awareness

Each year, more than 214,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer. Screening and early detection are the keys to survival. If you're 40 or over, join the millions of women who get mammograms on a regular basis. Also, find out more information about your risk factors and what you can do to detect breast cancer early.

What Is Breast Cancer?

Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women in the U.S. Breast cancer is a cancerous tumor that develops from the cells of the breast. Breast cancer occurs mostly in women, but men can develop it as well.

New Developments

New developments in identification include advances in imagery, such as full-field digital mammography. Less intrusive alternatives to surgery are also in development.

Risk Factors

The exact cause of breast cancer is unknown. However, research shows that the following risk factors may increase a woman's chances of developing breast cancer:

- Age
- Personal History
- Family History
- Having a first period before the age of 12
- Having a first pregnancy after age 30
- Having no children
- Lifestyle choices such as a poor diet, insufficient physical activity, alcohol use and smoking
- Exposure to estrogen - the longer a woman is exposed to estrogen (made by the body or taken as a replacement therapy), the more likely she is to develop breast cancer



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Having one or two of these risk factors doesn't mean a woman will develop breast cancer. Understanding your personal risk profile can help you and your healthcare provider plan for regular screening and lifestyle modifications as necessary.

Breast Health: A Three-Step Approach

- 1. Breast Self-Exam** - All you need is a mirror to perform a breast self-exam (BSE), which is an easy technique for learning what's normal in your breasts. A BSE helps the early detection of breast cancer because you monitor changes monthly. With a BSE, you can stay in tune with your body like nobody else can.
- 2. Mammography** - Used for routine screenings and diagnosis. They are sometimes done in conjunction with a biopsy if a tumor or other abnormality is found. Mammograms are best for locating abnormalities that are too small to feel and also for detecting changes in the breast.
- 3. Professional Breast Exam** - This is your assurance that you haven't missed



anything during your own monthly exam. During annual checkups, you can have your breasts examined by your healthcare professional.

Lifestyle Changes to Reduce Your Risk for Breast Cancer

Lifestyle improvements can possibly reduce your risk for breast cancer. They are also important steps for a healthier life, since they can help prevent heart disease, diabetes and other chronic conditions.

- **Decrease your daily fat intake:** Eat leaner meats and limit the amount of red meats. Reducing your fat intake helps prevent other health problems, such as heart disease and stroke, and may reduce your chance of developing breast and colon cancers.
- **Increase fiber in your diet:** Fiber is found in whole grains, vegetables and fruits. This type of diet is beneficial to your heart and may help prevent other cancers, such as colon cancer.
- **Eat fresh fruits and vegetables:** In addition to their fiber content, they have antioxidant properties and provide other nutrients that may help prevent some cancers.
- **Limit alcohol:** Evidence suggests that a small increase in risk exists for women who average two or more alcoholic drinks per day.
- **Stay active:** The U.S. Surgeon General reports that you can help prevent many health problems by engaging in a moderate amount of physical activity (such as taking a brisk, 30 minute walk) on most days of the week.

- **Strive to maintain a healthy weight recommended by a health professional:** Excess fat may stimulate estrogen production. Estrogen does not actually cause cancer, but it may stimulate the growth of cancer cells.
- **Don't smoke:** Although smoking doesn't cause breast cancer, it can increase the chance of blood clots, heart disease and other cancers that may spread to the breast.

For more information, visit the American Cancer Society at: www.cancer.org

For more information about Nationwide Better Health visit:

www.nwbetterhealth.com

Or contact your benefits representative.



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